

believe that is serving the stability of Asia and the Pacific. And that is of the foremost importance.

The cold war is over. The days of confrontation between East and West is over. And with the end of the cold war too, large sources of competition has disappeared, but regional conflicts have increased for various reasons. We see numerous areas of instability around the globe, and in this part of the world there still remain large amount of weapons of mass destruction.

Against that background, would it be possible for Japan alone to defend itself? To do that, a major effort will be required, and also probably will not be able to lay to rest international concerns vis-a-vis such Japanese endeavors. The United States is putting its presence in this area in the form of the American youth, and I believe it can be understood clearly how precious a presence they are for the security of this part of the world.

Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

Q. A question for the President. I believe the agreement law on security this time will mean a very major turning point for Japan-U.S. security, and I wonder if you have any comments to share with us.

President Clinton. My view is that it will reinforce our community—excuse me—our security relationship, not represent a turning point but a maturing of it. For example, when the Prime Minister asked us to consider the concerns of the people of Okinawa and I became acquainted with them as a result of some of the unfortunate incidents that you know well about, it bothered me that these matters had not been resolved before now, before this time. And again, I want to publicly say what I said to the Prime Minister last night: I want to thank him for giving the United States the opportunity to respond in an appropriate manner to try to resolve these matters. But we did it in a way that did not in any way undermine our own security or defense capabilities and, therefore, permits us to cooperate with Japan in whatever way may be necessary as challenges come along in the future and as Japan defines its own security agenda.

So I don't see this as a dramatic departure. I see this as the relationship between two

old friends maturing, dealing with things that needed to be dealt with, and adjusting to the challenges of the world that we now face.

Ebola Virus

Q. Mr. President, are you up to date on the apparent discovery of the Ebola virus in Texas? And what can the Federal Government do, I guess, via the CDC to make sure that no kind of scare develops from this?

President Clinton. Yes, I have been briefed on it this morning. The CDC is on top of it. We are working with the Texas health officials. We believe, based on what we now know, that there is no substantial threat to the general population of the people there or the people of the United States generally.

So I can say that I would urge people not to overreact to this. It's a serious matter; we are on top of it. If the facts change and we think there is something more to be concerned about, you may be sure we will inform the American people as soon as we can. But for now, I am confident the Federal Government is taking appropriate action, and we're on top of it, and there's nothing for the people to overreact to at this moment.

Prime Minister Hashimoto. President Clinton, thank you very much. And with this, we conclude the press conference. Thank you very much for coming.

NOTE: The President's 119th news conference began at 1:45 p.m. at the Akasaka Palace. Prime Minister Hashimoto spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

Remarks to the 7th Fleet on Board The U.S.S. Independence in Yokosuka, Japan

April 17, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Audience members. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Admiral Ellis, General Myers, Admiral Clemens, General Freeman, Admiral Tobin. Captain Polatty, I'm delighted to be here

with you. Master Chief Dwiggins; to the members of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, and to the sailors and families of the U.S.S. *Independence* and the 7th Fleet; to the children from the Sullivan School back there and their proud parents over here, I gather, and the other schools that are here, I want to thank you for this wonderful welcome.

The First Lady and I are delighted to be here, along with the Secretary of State, Ambassador and Mrs. Mondale, my Chief of Staff, Mr. Panetta, and Mr. Lake, the National Security Adviser. I should tell you that this is a particularly emotional moment for the Secretary of State because 51 years ago this September he came here to this very harbor as a 19-year-old ensign. So think what you might have ahead of you, all of you in the Navy. You may be Secretary of State some day.

I'm glad to be here on the U.S.S. *Independence* and with the 7th Fleet. I know there are others represented here—I hope, from the *Mobile Bay* and the *Bunker Hill*, from the *Blue Ridge* and the *McCluskey*, the *O'Brien* and the *Hewitt*, the *Asheville*, and the *Curtz*—one enthusiastic sailor here—[laughter]—the I-5 Team.

You know, for almost as long as there has been a United States there has been a ship called *Independence*. To you, the latest in the line of America's finest sailors, to all the United States Armed Forces in Japan, I bring a heartfelt message from every American back home: Thank you for your skill, your sacrifice, and your service. Thank you, and God bless you all.

Way back in 1959, when the *Indy* slipped down the ways, President Eisenhower was in office, the cold war was at its peak, and most of you weren't even born yet. But because the *Indy* was there, along with millions of brave men and women, we won that long cold war struggle.

Time after time, the sailors of the *Independence* stood up for freedom and stood down freedom's enemies. In the Cuban missile crisis, *Indy* was there. In Vietnam and Lebanon and Grenada, *Indy* was there. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, you were the first carrier on the scene. You delivered our answer up close and personal. In peacetime

and war, this great ship and its battle group have been there as America's shield and America's sword.

Your last deployment off Taiwan helped to calm a rising storm. Without firing a single shot, you reassured nations all around the Pacific. With the quiet power of your example, you gave the world another example of America's power and America's character. And I thank you especially for that.

Through you, the United States is in the Western Pacific. We fought three wars in Asia in this century and sacrificed some of our finest Americans in every single one. With your strong presence here we are preventing war's return and preserving stability for a remarkable region that is growing so fast it buys enough American products and services to support the jobs of 3 million of your countrymen and women back home in the United States.

Make no mistake, there is still a threat that war could return. Without you, the stability and prosperity of Asia could be in danger, and, therefore, so could America's. Old rivalries could break out again. A rouge state could get the wrong idea. A changing region could become unstable. But with you here, Asia is more secure, and so is America. Halfway around the world, your loved ones are safer because you are here at your stations, keeping the peace in a time of change and challenge.

I applaud the job you have done in building an alliance with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. And I salute the officers and crew of the *Myoko* who honor us with their presence here today.

Fifty years ago no one would have believed that an American carrier and a Japanese cruiser could be berthed side by side, that our forces would work shoulder to shoulder day-in and day-out. But today, Prime Minister Hashimoto and I have signed a Joint Security Declaration to strengthen our alliance and prepare it for the challenges of the 21st century, together. We can do this because you are here, backing our commitments with your power.

America won the cold war, but now we are about the business of securing the peace, thanks to your dedication and your excellence. Let me say that I am well aware that

we see that excellence every day in so many ways, here, from the pilots and everyone on the flight deck to the boiler technicians, from the mess cooks to the storekeepers, to the officers on the bridge. It takes every single one of you, working together as a team, to keep this ship on the flight line, to land some of the best aircraft in the world on what looks to their pilots like a postage stamp in the sea.

Your teamwork has notched record after record, including the mark among active ships for arrested landings, 343,000 of them. Congratulations. As someone said to me as the helicopter was setting down, that's a lot of nonskid. [Laughter]

As the oldest ship in the Navy, you do fly this remarkable ensign behind me that says, "Don't Tread On Me." And as was said earlier in the introduction by the Admiral, this week, this very week is the 221st anniversary of the Revolutionary War battles of Lexington and Concord, the first in America's long struggle for independence. I hope you will think about that, each and every one of you, this week. I hope you will imagine what it might have been like so many years ago, over 200 years ago, for those young people embarking on their struggle, risking their lives for what was then nothing more than a dream.

Now, more than 200 years later, you represent in your uniforms the oldest democracy in human history. Thanks to you and those who came before you, your skill and professionalism, not only does the oldest fighting ship in the Fleet inspire the same respect as we have for our early patriots but thanks to you and the people who came before you, we are still here.

As you keep it that way, on freedom's flagship, remember that 221 years of people like you have made America what it is today and make possible this remarkable partnership we celebrate with the Japanese and make possible the guarantee of freedom for your children and your grandchildren and people throughout the world. I thank you for that.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the families of the 7th Fleet for their support. Our military families bear such a heavy burden of America's leadership, especially those stationed at Yokosuka and other bases

so far from home; those who have to cope with the extra strain of long periods when ships are at sea, when one parent has to carry the full load to run a household and raise the children. We ask so much of our families, but again and again, they deliver. Our Nation is grateful to you, as well, for our security depends upon you, as well.

To the men and women of the 7th Fleet, you must know that you represent the very best of America. Over and over again, you have proved your excellence. Thanks to you, the world knows now that the United States will stand firm in Asia. Thanks to you, we can make this new Security Declaration with Japan. And everybody knows that we mean it and that we can mean it. We can stand firm for peace and security, for democracy and freedom, for a good and decent future for the children of this region and the children of the United States, thanks to you.

Our Nation is in your debt now and forever. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. James Ellis, USN, Commander, Carrier Group 5; Lt. Gen. Richard Myers, USAF, Commander, U.S. Forces Japan; Vice Adm. Archie Clemens, USN, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet; Maj. Gen. Waldo Freeman, USA, Commanding General, U.S. Army Japan; Rear Adm. Byron Tobin, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan; Capt. David Polatty, Commanding Officer, and MMCM Ashley Dwiggin, Command Master Chief, U.S.S. *Independence*; and Joan Mondale, wife of Ambassador Walter Mondale. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6885—National Volunteer Week, 1996

April 17, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The history of America is a history of volunteerism. Our people have always worked together to resolve concerns, to fight injustice, to rebuild communities, and to comfort those in need. And though some regard today's society with cynicism and doubt, we need only look to the more than 89.2 million